

## James Lesson 11 Article

### Healing

The question of the assurance of healing must be balanced with the will of God in each case. As C. Hodge wrote,

It cannot be supposed that God has subjected Himself in the government of the world, or in the dispensation of his gifts, to the shortsighted wisdom of men, by promising, without condition, to do whatever they ask. No rational man could wish this to be the case.<sup>42</sup>

He then asserted that the condition expressed in 1 John 5:14 is everywhere else implied: “This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” It was the divine will in Elijah’s case that drought and rain should be limited to a certain time (see vv. 17–18). This is also the case with every event of healing. The intercessor must trust the will of God.<sup>1</sup>

### Restoration

Just as the fellowship of believers must overcome the temptation to dissociate from the poor (2:16) and the sick, it should not leave the wandering believer to his own wrong path. Just as they should practice mutual correction through confession of sin within the gathered community, they should also seek to restore (lit. “turn”) the wayward brother or sister. As realistic as James was about stumbling and straying from the truth into sin, he presupposed that the church would be in a constant state of readiness to minister restoration to any who do so. Since one’s own evil desires readily drag him away into sin (cf. 1:14–15), a believer should not condemn (4:11–12) but seek the wayward and bring them to effective restoration through the mercy of God (cf. 2:13). This final charge involves a ministry of bringing back, of restoration.<sup>50</sup> In the next verse this term will be used to indicate the turning away from evil; here it is the positive turning (returning) to the good that is found in the gifts of God. The believer who brings restoration becomes an instrument of those inexhaustible gifts to those who will listen and return to the way of truth.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> C. Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940), 3:704.

<sup>1</sup> Richardson, K. A. (1997). *Vol. 36: James*. The New American Commentary (238). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Ps 79:3; Lam 5:21; Mal 2:6; Matt 13:15; Luke 1:16–17; Acts 26:18. This is another dimension of what I have suggested is functioning here under the principle of the “priesthood of all believers”; cf. v. 16.

<sup>2</sup> Richardson, K. A. (1997). *Vol. 36: James*. The New American Commentary (242–243). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.